SPEECH

OF

HON. JOHN R. THOMSON,

OF NEW JERSEY,

ON

THE ADMISSION OF KANSAS;

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, MARCH 3, 1858.

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1858.

SPEECH.

The Senate having under consideration the bill for the admission of Kansas into the Union as a State—

Mr. THOMSON said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: I shall vote for the bill for the admission of Kansas as a State into the Union, and I shall ask permission, very briefly, to state some of the reasons which induce me to do so.

I am aware, sir, that this subject has been so fully discussed in this Chamber that nothing new can be added to it by any one, least of all by me; and I therefore owe an apology in advance to the Senate for repeating, as I shall be obliged to do, what has been said before so much better than I can possibly hope to do. But the section of the Union from which I come, with the views I entertain, render it proper, if not necessary, that I should ask your indulgence for a few minutes.

For the last four years our country has been kept in a state of fearful excitement by the agitation of a question which has threatened the existence of our Union, and, if much longer continued, must at no distant day inevitably dissolve it.

An opportunity, in my opinion, is now presented to settle it—an opportunity by which this question, which can never be discussed with profit or safety in Congress, may be removed forever from its Halls.

An opportunity is now presented to localize an institution within the limits of the States which are interested in it, and to carry out the great principle of the Kansas-Nebraska act of "non-intervention by Congress with slavery in the States and Territories." Shall we embrace the opportunity thus presented, or shall we, by neglecting it, put in peril, as we will do, the peace, if not the existence, of the Union?

A Territory of the United States asks admission as a State into the Union, and presents to you a constitution in every respect—in form and in substance—legal and republican; a constitution framed and put into operation in precisely the same manner as ten of the new States of the Union; a constitution whose validity is recognized by the acts of the people, and substantially ratified by their election, under its provisions, of a member of Congress to represent them in your House of Representatives, a Governor, and members of the State Legislature.

But, notwithstanding this perfect conformity with law and usage, this application is resisted on the ground of its constitution not being in accordance with the will of the people, and its not having been submitted as a whole to them for ratification or rejection.

Now, Mr. President, from the great stress which has been laid in certain quarters upon the necessity of such a submission, one would be apt to suppose that such had always heretofore been the rule as a prerequisite to the admission of a State into the Union; and that the case of Kansas, in which the whole constitution was not submitted to the people, was a fatal exception to that rule, and on that account should be rejected by Congress.

But in the investigation which I have made into the history of the formation of the constitutions of the different States of the Union, I have arrived at a very different result; and am satisfied that, so far from submission being a rule, it has been a marked exception to it. Now, although I do most heartily approve of the submission to the people of a State of all great questions affecting their interests, not only their forms of government, but also legislative acts involving the creation of debt and the faith of the State, yet, sir, the submission of a constitution, after having been framed by a convention of delegates duly elected for that purpose, has certainly not been considered necessary by a large number, if not by a majority of the States of this Union. If the people desire to act directly by their votes upon the adoption of a constitution, they have the undoubted right to do so. But they have an equal right to delegate their power to a convention to act for them, and to make and put in operation a constitution without submitting it to them for their further action.

And if it be true, as has recently been said, that a submission to the people, and their adoption of a constitution, is necessary to give it validity, then,

upon the same principle, legislative acts should in like manner be submitted before taking effect; for the people are more interested in, and frequently more seriously injured by, bad laws than by bad constitutions.

I have said that a large number, if not a majority, of the States of the Union, have not considered this submission as at all necessary. The constitutions, now in force, of the following named States, were not submitted for ratification to the people, but adopted in convention.

Vermont adopted her constitution July 4, 1793, in convention at Windsor. (Compiled Statutes of Vermont, page 15.)

Connecticut, by convention, in 1818. (See Compilation of Statutes of Connecticut, 1854, pages 29 and 45.)

Delaware, by convention, in 1831. (See Acts of 1831, page 49; and Revised Code, page 43.)

Pennsylvania, by convention, in 1838, with a provision for future amendments to be ratified by the people. (See Purdon's Digest, page 17, section 10.)

North Carolina adopted her present constitution in 1776, by convention; amendments in 1835.

South Carolina, in 1790, by convention.

Georgia, by convention, on the 23d of May, 1798.

Alabama, in 1819, by convention under enabling act. (See Code of Alabama, page 26, section 5, page 28.)

Mississippi, by convention, in 1817; and revised in like manner in 1832.

Tennessee, by convention, in 1836.

Kentucky, by convention, in 1799.

Arkansas, by convention, without enabling act. (See Revised Statutes of Arkansas, pages 17–48.)

Missouri, by convention, in 1820; and not submitted to the people.

Illinois, by convention, in 1818; also appears not to have been submitted to the people.

The following were compelled by statute to submit the constitutions framed by the conventions to the people:

New York, constitution adopted in 1846. Section 9, act of 1845, providing for the convention, required its ratification by the people.

New Jersey, act of 1844, approved February 23. Section nine required its submission to the people. It was submitted and ratified in 1844.

Maryland, formed in 1851, and ratified by the people, in accordance with previous act of Legislature. (See Acts of 1849, chapter 346, section 8.)

Virginia, formed in 1851. Act of March 13, 1851, required its ratification by the people.

Indiana, formed in 1851, ratified by the people, as required by the law authorizing the convention. (See act of 1850, approved January 18, sections 14 and 15.) The section relative to the exclusion and colonization of negroes was submitted as a distinct proposition. (See Revised Statutes, volume 1, page 72.)

Wisconsin, 1848. Section nine of schedule required its ratification by the people. (Revised Statutes, 1849.) In April, 1847, the constitution was defeated by over seven thousand majority. (Niles's Register, volume 72, page 114.) A new constitution was then formed, and the State admitted under it May 29, 1848.

Iowa, formed in 1846. Previous laws of June 10, 1845, (over the veto of the Governor,) and of January 17, 1846, required ratification by the people.

Ohio, the first constitution, formed under an enabling act of Congress, adopted 29th October, 1802, was not submitted to the people; that of the 10th March, 1857, was submitted to the people and approved by them.

Louisiana, formed 1852. The constitution was, by previous enactment, required to be submitted, and was ratified by the people.

Michigan, formed 1850. Act of March 9, 1850, required it to be submitted to the people. (See Laws of 1850, No. 78, section 6, on page 66.)

Maine, formed in 1819, by convention, (page 432 Hickey's Constitution;) amendments submitted to the people 1834, 1837, 1839.

New Hampshire, formed 1792. (See Compiled Statutes, page 15.) Approved by the two-third vote of the people, and established by convention September 5, 1792.

Rhode Island, formed 1842. Ratified by vote of the people in pursuance of act of the Legislature.

Massachusetts, formed 1780. Convention adjourned till constitution was ratified by two-third vote.

Texas, formed 1845. Submitted to and ratified by the people.

The constitutions of the following States were submitted by conventions to the people, without their being required by law to do so:

Florida, formed in 1838. Territorial act of 1838 (see act of 1838, page 5) did not require the ratification of the constitution by the people. There was no authority of Congress. The convention (see Digest of Laws of Florida, page 9) required ratification by the people.

California, formed in 1849. Convention required the ratification of the constitution by the people. There was no authority of Congress or legislative act to frame a constitution. (See Statutes of California, page 24, sections 5, 6, and 7.)

From this statement it will be seen, sir, that in fourteen States constitutions were formed by conventions, and went into operation without any submission whatever to the people.

In fifteen States conventions, in obedience to the law convening them, directed the submission of their constitutions to the people; and in only two States, viz., Florida and California, conventions submitted their constitutions to the people, without being required by law to do so.

But, considering the very peculiar circumstances attending the formation of the constitutions and State governments of these States, Florida and California, they can hardly be regarded as exceptions to the rule and practice of conventions, viz., submitting constitutions *only* when they were expressly required by law to do so.

In the case of Florida the constitution was submitted to Congress February 20, 1839, and it was not admitted as a State until March 3, 1845. This delay was occasioned by the great diversity of opinion which existed in the Territory, as to whether application should be made at that time for the admission of the Territory as a State, or to postpone the application until their population would authorize them to ask admission for two States, East and West Florida, into the Union. It was this difference of opinion, as appears from the proceedings of Congress from 1839 to 1845,

which postponed its admission for so long a time. The submission of the constitution to the people was not intended merely (if at all) for the purpose of securing their ratification of its provisions; but for the purpose of ascertaining whether they desired, at that time, to make application, under the constitution submitted to them, for admission into the Union. The vote on this question was very nearly equal. The difference between Florida and Kansas, in this respect, is a very marked one. In Kansas the sense of the people as to whether they desired admission into the Union, was taken before the assembling of the convention, and in Florida, in a different form, after it had framed a constitution.

And with regard to California the same necessity of submission existed in an equal, if not greater degree. At the time of the formation of the constitution of that State, California was not an organized Territory of the United States, but a conquered country, under military government. The convention of delegates to frame a constitution was called not by any legal or any duly authorized body, but by order of the military governor. And under such circumstances it became an indispensable necessity, that a constitution, so framed, should be ratified by the people, in order to impart validity to it. Congress could not otherwise be expected to entertain their application for admission.

In the case of Kansas, also, it must be observed, that so far from the convention being instructed by the Legislature to submit the constitution they might frame to the people for their sanction, the very reverse may fairly be inferred from the fact that the act "to provide for the election of delegates to the convention" was vetoed by Governor Geary, because, as he says in his message returning the bill, "it failed to make any provision to submit the constitution, when framed, to the consideration of the people for their ratification or rejection." And yet, sir, the act was passed over this veto, by a two-third vote. Certainly then, after this expression of the Legislature of Kansas, and the long line of precedents to which it might refer, the convention might fairly consider itself justified in submitting or not submitting the constitution to the people, as in its judgment at the time might be considered most expedient. From these facts is not, I ask, the inference plain and irresistible, that when the people, speaking through their representatives, desire such a submission, they provide for it, and that when they do not provide for it, a convention may consider it unnecessary for it to do what the law which called it into being did not require or expect it to do. It cannot be said in any case where this was not required, that it was an oversight. That would be doing great injustice to the Legislatures of the States, and to the learned men who participated in the formation of their several constitutions.

Again, sir, I will ask the attention of the Senate to the "joint resolutions of Congress for annexing Texas to the United States," approved March 1, 1845, for the purpose of showing the opinion entertained by that body on this question of submission. This "joint resolution" declares that—

"Congress doth consent that the territory properly included within, and rightfully belonging to, the Republic of Texas, may be erected into a new State, to be called the State of Texas, with a republican form of government, to be adopted by the people of said Republic, 'by deputies in convention assembled,' with the consent of the existing government, in order that the same may be admitted as one of the States of this Union."

Not one word is here said about submission to the people, notwithstanding there was at that time probably as much difference of opinion, on some subjects, in that Republic, as now exists in Kansas on others.

Again: in the resolution providing for the admission of the State of Missouri, "on a certain condition," approved March 2, 1821, such a submission was not deemed necessary. This condition was accepted, not by the people of Missouri, but by the Legislature of the State, by a solemn public act, declaring the assent of this State to the "fundamental condition contained in the resolution of Congress," and approved June 26, 1821. This act of the Legislature, accepting the "fundamental condition," which then became a part of the constitution of the State, was deemed an acceptance by the State; and the President of the United States, on the 10th of August, 1821, issued his proclamation, declaring the admission of Missouri complete, according to law, and it became one of the States of the Union.

We have now seen that an equal number of the States of the Union, the Congress of the United States, and the President, Mr. Monroe, have not regarded submission of a constitution to the people for their approval, as necessary to give it validity. Let me now ask attention to the action of the territorial committee of this body and the Senate on this very question. The distinguished Senator from Georgia, [Mr. Toombs,] on the 25th of June, 1856, submitted to the Senate a bill for the admission of Kansas as a State; which was referred to the Committee on Territories, of which the distinguished Senator from Illinois [Mr. Douglas] was chairman. The third section of this bill contained the following provision:

"That the propositions be, and the same are hereby, offered to the said convention of the people of Kansas, when formed, for their free acceptance or rejection; which, if accepted by the convention, and ratified by the people at the election for the adoption of the constitution, shall be obligatory upon the United States and the said State of Kansas."

But, sir, when this bill, known as the "Toombs bill," was reported back to the Senate, the words "*and ratified by the people at the election for the adoption of the constitution*," were stricken out, and the bill as amended passed the Senate, every Democratic member present voting for it except one.

And, Mr. President, in view of these facts, may I not say that, if the convention of Kansas did err in the respect of not submitting their whole constitution for popular approval, it has, nevertheless, done more to propitiate the spirit of popular sovereignty, by submitting an important provision in it, than fourteen States of the Union, whose constitutions, in whole or in part, have never received, by vote, the sanction of the people; and I submit that its rejection on that account at this day would be most cruel and unjust.

If misguided men in Kansas neglected the opportunity presented by such a submission to exhibit their majority, and, by their refusing to vote, gave an easy victory to their opponents, (by which an obnoxious provision in the constitution has

been retained in it, which they might have stricken out,) they have no one to complain of but themselves, and the bad advisers who directed and controlled their action.

The Territorial Legislature afforded them, in the first instance, an opportunity, if they were a majority, as they claim to be, to elect delegates, who would have represented their views, not only on the slavery, but on all other questions in the convention; and the convention afterwards gave them an opportunity of striking from the constitution it had framed the only provision on which any difference of opinion existed in the Territory; yet, neglecting both opportunities, these men, or rather this party, now complain of injustice and wrong having been done them in the formation and adoption of the constitution, and insist upon its rejection. Appearing upon the record, in all the votes cast for delegates to the convention, and afterwards in the vote on the constitution, as a minority, they still insist that they are a large majority of the people of the Territory, and have been defrauded of their rights by a small minority.

And, sir, if it be true that the free-State party, as it is called, with a majority of three to one, as compared to the so-called pro-slavery party, suffered itself to be oppressed, wronged, and downtrodden by so small a minority, they, sir, are not entitled to our sympathy for their sufferings, but, on the contrary, deserve our contempt for their cowardice and imbecility. They claim to be a large majority, and it may be true; but there is no evidence of it in any election returns with which Congress can have any concern. They refuse to give the proof of this in the only way in which it can be given—by their votes—and then modestly ask us to take their word for it that they *are* a very large majority, and that the constitution framed at Lecompton is not in accordance with their will.

In the election for delegates to the convention, and the vote on the slavery clause of the constitution, the majority was very large against this party. No doubt it was so *very* large because in a factious spirit, they refused to vote on these occasions. But this was their own act, and they have no right to ask Congress to give them relief from the consequences of their own misconduct, by setting aside the elections in which they refused to participate. Congress can only judge of the result of an election by votes delivered, and not by votes withheld.

In this case, it seems to me that the only questions which Congress can properly consider (with reference to its admission) are not, whether every man in the Territory voted or not, nor into every irregularity which occurred in the elections; nor whether more frauds were committed by one party or the other party in the Territory, in their local elections. With these things Congress has nothing to do. But they may inquire into the legality of the body which framed the constitution, and as to the vote by which the constitution, or that part submitted to the people, was adopted. And in regard to the legality of the one, and the fairness of the other, there ought to be no dispute.

The Territorial Legislature, elected by the people, recognized by Congress, by the President and late President of the United States, by all the Governors of the Territory, including Governor Walker, were fully authorized in assembling a convention to frame a constitution, preparatory to its application for admission as a State into the Union. The sense of the people of the Territory had been taken as to whether they desired to be admitted into the Union, and a large majority were in favor of it. The Territorial Legislature then, in conformity with their wishes thus expressed, passed an act providing for the election of delegates to a convention to frame a constitution. The legality of this act is fully maintained by Governor Walker. He says:

"The Territorial Legislature, then, in assembling this convention, were fully sustained by the act of Congress; and the authority of the convention is distinctly recognized in my instructions from the President of the United States. Those who oppose this course cannot aver the alleged irregularity of the Territorial Legislature, whose laws in town and city elections, in corporate franchises, and on all other subjects but slavery, they acknowledge by their votes and acquiescence. If that Legislature was invalid, then are we without law or order in Kansas; without town, city, or county organization; all legal and judicial transactions are void; all titles null; and anarchy reigns throughout our borders."

The whole people are then invited and urged to vote for their delegates.

Mr. Stanton, in his address of the 17th of April, 1857, says:

"The Government especially recognizes the territorial act which provides for assembling a convention to frame a constitution, with a view to making application to Congress for admission as a State into the Union. That act is regarded as presenting the only test of the qualification of votes for delegates to the convention, and all preceding repugnant restrictions are thereby repealed. In this light the act must be allowed to have provided *for a full and fair expression of the will of the people through the delegates* who may be chosen to represent them in the constitutional convention."

And Governor Walker, on the 27th of May, in his inaugural address, says:

"The people of Kansas, then, are invited by the highest authority known to the Constitution, to participate freely, and fairly, in the election of delegates to frame a constitution and State government."

And in the same address he warns them of the consequences which may result from their refusal to exercise the right of suffrage. He says:

"You should not console yourself with the reflection th a you may, by a subsequent vote, defeat the ratification of the constitution." * * * "Why incur the hazard of the preliminary formation of a constitution, by a minority, as alleged by you, when a majority, by their own votes, could control the framing of that instrument."

But notwithstanding these invitations, appeals, and solemn warnings, a portion claiming to be a majority of the people refused to take part in the election, and thus suffered a minority to elect their delegates and frame a constitution in accordance with their own views.

The convention of delegates then, thus fairly elected, met and framed a constitution; and among its provisions is to be found one recognizing the institution of domestic slavery within the State. All the disturbances in Kansas, from the establishment of the territorial government, had their origin in this distracting and dangerous subject; and as it was a provision of paramount importance, the convention submitted it to the people for them to determine whether it should be retained in the constitution or stricken out. The question was thus ordered by the convention to be submitted to the people to be decided by their votes: "constitution with slavery," or "constitution without slavery." At the time and places ordered, polls were opened and the votes were received on this single question.

The convention was not bound, as I have before stated, by the act of the Territorial Legislature to submit the whole or any part of the constitution for ratification; but they did submit *that* part of it which related to this question, and the factious and revolutionary party, in like manner as they refused to vote for delegates to the convention, refused to vote upon this submission. It was accordingly retained, and is now a part of the organic law of Kansas as presented to Congress.

It seems to me, sir, that these people, being in a state of rebellion against the territorial government and the United States, were determined to resist from the beginning everything tending to a quiet settlement of the disturbances in the Territory, and the organization of a State government; and that I may do no injustice to them, I ask leave to insert what Governor Walker says to them in his proclamation of the 15th of July:

"You have, however, chosen to disregard the laws of Congress, and of the territorial government created by it; and whilst professing to acknowledge a State government rejected by Congress, and which can, therefore, now exist only by a successful rebellion, and exact from all your officers the perilous and sacrilegious oath to support the so-called State constitution; yet you have, even in defiance of the so-called State Legislature, which refused to grant you a charter, proceeded to create a local government of your own, based only upon insurrection and revolution. The very oath which you require from all your officers, to support your so-called Topeka State constitution, is violated in the very act of putting in operation a charter rejected even by them.

"A rebellion so iniquitous, and necessarily involving such awful consequences, has never before disgraced any age or country."

And I will here express a strong doubt, judging from the turbulent and rebellious character of these men, whether, if the whole constitution had been submitted to them, and had been rejected, they would have called a convention to make another one. I think it extremely doubtful. Pretending, as they do, to regard the Topeka constitution as a valid one, they would adhere to it. For the sake of consistency they would maintain the validity of their own constitution, and would hardly vote for anything which would destroy the work of their own hands, and expose the iniquity of their own conduct. Besides, sir, a large number of these men do not want a settlement of this question. That would bring peace not only to Kansas, but to the Union; and their vocation would be gone. It is not peace that they seek or desire. It is agitation. Did they seek peace—did they honestly desire to change the constitution by peaceful and speedy means—they would be here, sir, advocating the admission of Kansas as a State, at the earliest possible day, that they might then take its government into their own hands, and make such a constitution and laws as would suit themselves. There can be but one of two reasons why they do not pursue this course: either they know they are not, as they claim to be, a majority of the people; or, if they are a majority, they prefer strife, agitation, civil war, and bloodshed, to a peaceful settlement of this question. And all this can, and I fear will, be brought about by the rejection of the Lecompton constitution.

In this spirit, and with this end in view, they pretend that no change can be made in the constitution until the year 1864, and that the curse of slavery will be fixed upon them until that time, if not forever. And this is done in the face of the Bill of Rights, which provides, in article two, that—

"All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit; and therefore they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform, or abolish their form of government in such manner as they may think proper."

And also, in the face of the plain meaning of the article in the schedule which provides, that the constitution, after the year 1864, cannot be altered except in a manner prescribed; but says nothing whatever in regard to it between the time of its adoption and the period above named, 1864:

"SEC. 14. After the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four, whenever the Legislature shall think it necessary to amend, alter, or change its constitution, they shall recommend to the electors at the next general election, two thirds of the members of each House concurring, to vote for or against calling a convention; and if it shall appear that a majority of all citizens of the State have voted for a convention, the Legislature shall, at its next regular session, call a convention, to consist of as many members as there may be in the House of Representatives at the time, to be chosen in the same manner, at the same places, and by the same electors that choose the representatives: said delegates so elected shall meet within three months after said election, for the purpose of revising, amending, or changing the constitution; but no alteration shall be made to affect the rights of property in the ownership of slaves."

The report of the territorial committee of the Senate, presented on the 18th of February last, in reference to this question, says:

"The Lecompton convention has provided a full, lawful, and perfect remedy for every conceivable grievance, and placed the remedy in the unrestricted hands of the majority of the people, by inserting in the constitution the following distinct and unequivocal recognition of power."

That is in the second article of the bill of rights, to which I have just referred.

Again, Mr. President, if all change *were* prohibited until 1864, it seems to me that it comes with an ill grace from the especial advocates of the doctrine of popular sovereignty to deny to the people the right to make a change in their organic law, in spite of any prohibition whatever, whenever they see fit. And it is not at all consistent for them to maintain that the sovereigns of to-day may frame a constitution which cannot be changed without revolution by the sovereigns of to-morrow. If this be true, sir, then have the people of these United States passed through a great many revolutions without their knowing it; for nearly every old State in the Union, and some of the new States, have changed their constitutions within the past half century. But, on this point, I will take the liberty to refer to very high authority—the distinguished Senator from New York, [Mr. SEWARD.] In his speech, delivered in the Senate on the 2d of July, 1856, on the admission of Kansas as a State, under the Topeka constitution, he says:

"I take the constitution, as we must all take it, for better or for worse—just as it is—or we cannot admit the State at all. The people in the new States make their constitutions. Our power is limited to the admission or rejection of a State, whatever its constitution may be. Again, it is not clear that the provision complained of by the Senator from Georgia will prevent the people of Kansas from subverting this constitution, and establishing a new one at any time short of the expiration of nine years. The constitution of the State of New York, established in 1821, provided for alterations to be made with the consent of two successive Legislatures. A party desiring radical innovation, and finding it impossible to obtain that object in the form prescribed in the constitution, secured a majority in the Legislature; and, without any

constitutional authority, carried through a law by which proceedings were instituted for calling a convention, which was subsequently held, and which framed a new constitution. This new constitution, being submitted to the people, and approved by them, in derogation of the old one, became, and it yet remains, the supreme law of the land."

And so in the State of New Jersey. The constitution of 1776, which was abolished by the substitution of that of 1845, declared it "firm and inviolable, unless a reconciliation between Great Britain and the colonies should take place, and the latter taken under the protection of the Crown of Britain;" or, in other words, it was declared to be firm and inviolable forever. Yet a majority of the Legislature of that State passed an "act to provide for the election of delegates to prepare a constitution of the State, and for submitting the same to the people thereof for ratification or rejection." And this convention met and framed a constitution, which in due time was submitted and approved, and is now in full force in that State. During all which time, from the passage of that act until the new constitution went into operation, the people of that State were entirely unconscious that they were passing through a revolution.

I think, therefore, we need be under no concern in reference to the ability of the people of Kansas, both under the provisions of the constitution and the higher law of popular sovereignty, to change their constitution whenever they see fit.

Mr. President, the present opportunity of settling the dangerous question of slavery, and binding together with new and strong bonds of affection the different sections of our common country, should not pass unimproved. Bad as things have been in Kansas for the last few years, I feel very confident they will be rendered infinitely worse if we refuse to admit the State into the Union at this time. Frauds, iniquities, and acts of violence without number, have been perpetrated, perhaps, in an equal degree by both parties. They are painful in the extreme, and I am impatient that we should be relieved from their consideration, and that these people should be left to settle their own difficulties in their own way. "*Non nostrum tantas componere lites.*" It is not for Congress to assume the duty of settling their domestic difficulties.

The evils to arise from the rejection of Kansas appear to me so great and fearful, and those which may arise from its admission so slight and transitory, that I cannot hesitate to plead for its admission. Reject it, and you reopen with increased ferocity the intestine war which has been raging for years past, but which at the present moment has nearly ceased. The strife, then, will not be confined to the inhabitants of that region, but auxiliaries from free States on the one side, and slave States on the other, with arms in their hands, will rush to the seat of war, thirsting for each other's blood. And, sir, if the Union should survive the rejection, which I doubt, (for the united South would consider it a declaration that hereafter no slave State shall be admitted into the Union,) who can fail to see that war cannot be confined to the locality of Kansas? It will go into bordering States. It will be a sectional war, and the knell of the Union will then be rung. At present there is a calm in Kansas. For the sake of the Union, do not disturb it; do not raise another storm which, in its fury, may sweep away not only Kansas, but yourselves. Leave the people of Kansas free to fight their own battles for supremacy, under their own State government and laws. They will soon settle down as the citizens of all the other States have done, and we shall hear no more of bleeding Kansas or of border ruffians. More than all, the slavery agitation, banished from the Halls of Congress, will cease to distract us, and our beloved Union will be established on a basis which, I trust in God, may never be overthrown.